

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

December 1, 2005

GOODIN CALLS PRAYER RULING "INTOLERANT," SEEKS TO DELIVER JAN. 4 INVOCATION

INDIANAPOLIS – Calling Wednesday's federal court ruling that the name of Jesus Christ cannot be uttered during prayers offered in the Indiana House of Representatives an example of "judicial intolerance," State Rep. Terry Goodin (D-Crothersville) said today he will do everything in his power as a public official to continue to demonstrate his faith.

In that vein, Goodin said he would formally request that House Speaker Brian Bosma (R-Indianapolis) allow him to deliver the opening prayer when the House returns for the 2006 legislative session on January 4.

"Like so many of my fellow lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, I am not going to stand for this assault on our freedoms of speech and religion," Goodin said. "A judge is not going to tell me what I can or cannot say to express my belief in Christ, and I will continue to do everything I can to declare my feelings as a citizen, a Christian and an elected member of the Indiana House of Representatives."

Goodin's sentiments came after U.S. Southern District Court Judge David Hamilton issued a permanent injunction barring Bosma from permitting sectarian prayers in the House chambers. While prayers will continue to be allowed, those offering the invocations must not advance one faith or use Christ's name or title.

"For as long as anyone can remember, each House session has started with two essential steps: a prayer of appreciation to our Creator, and a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to demonstrate our devotion to our country," Goodin said. "Apparently those traditions mean nothing to an appointed judge who holds no accountability to the wishes and beliefs of the vast majority of Hoosiers."

"Throughout my time in the Indiana House, I have witnessed prayers from many different people from a variety of faiths," continued the legislator, who has served as 66th District representative since 2000. "Even though the sources are different, the messages are the same: blessings to the people of Indiana and hope that the Legislature's deliberations will follow a spiritual path that benefits us all."

If the Speaker allows him to offer the prayer at the start of the January 4 session day, Goodin said he will follow the precedents set by others who have appeared in the chamber to lead the invocation.

"Like those who have appeared before me, I will not use this opportunity to proselytize, advance or disparage any faith or belief," Goodin said. "I will use this chance to pray in the tradition of my faith, and ask for guidance in our deliberations. I hope the Speaker will grant this request, and allow the members of the Indiana House to show their devotion."

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